

What is claimed is:

1. A moving picture coding method which performs coding by dividing a moving picture into one base layer and at least one enhancement layer, comprising:  
5     an extracting step of extracting the degree of importance of each area of the moving picture; and  
      an assigning step of assigning coded data of each area to the enhancement layers in descending order of  
10    the degree of importance of the areas.
2. The moving picture coding method according to claim 1, wherein the area having the highest degree of importance is regarded as an important area and the degree of  
15   importance is decreased from said important area toward the neighboring area.
3. The moving picture coding method according to claim 1, wherein the degree of importance is extracted by  
20   detecting a face area or moving object in the moving picture.
4. The moving picture coding method according to claim 2, wherein the degree of importance is further increased  
25   for the area inside the important area where there is a large residual value between the base layer decoded moving picture and the original moving picture.

5. The moving picture coding method according to claim 1, wherein in said assigning step, a shift value is set according to the degree of importance, a bit shift is performed on the coded data of each area by the  
5 corresponding shift value and the coded data of each area is assigned to the enhancement layer.

6. The moving picture coding method according to claim 5, wherein a greater shift value is set as the degree  
10 of importance increases.

7. A moving picture transmission method which carries out coding and transfer of a moving picture using the moving picture coding method according to claim 1  
15 synchronized with each other.

8. A moving picture coding apparatus comprising:  
a picture input section that inputs an original moving picture;

20 a base layer coding section that extracts one base layer from said original moving picture and codes the base layer;

a base layer decoding section that decodes the base layer coded by said base layer coding section and  
25 reconstructs the base layer;

a residual picture generation section that generates a residual picture between the reconstructed picture reconstructed by said base layer decoding section

and said original moving picture;

an important area detection section that detects  
an important area from said original moving picture;

a gradual shift map generation section that sets  
5 bit shift values gradually according to the degree of  
importance of the important area extracted by said  
important area detection section;

a DCT section that DCT-transforms the residual  
picture generated by said residual picture generation  
10 section;

a bit shift section that bit-shifts the DCT  
coefficient obtained by said DCT section by the bit shift  
value obtained by said gradual shift map generation  
section;

15 a bit plane VLC section that performs VLC processing  
for each bit plane bit-shifted by said bit shift section;  
and

an enhancement layer division section that divides  
the moving picture stream VLC-processed by said bit plane  
20 VLC section as an enhancement layer into at least one  
portion.

9. A program for causing a computer to execute the  
moving picture coding method according to claim 1.